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ABSTRACT

School board members can be most effective if they are fully aware of their responsibilities, their political situations, and practical methods for maximizing the impact of their actions. This handbook reviews these elements of success in eight chapters. The first chapter advises the board member on how to determine his or her role in relation to the community, other board members, the school district administration, and the law. Chapter 2 looks at the board as a team, notes the importance of controlling conflict, and suggests that board members profile their colleagues in order to understand better the factors motivating them and influencing their thinking. Chapter 3 is devoted to the board's relationship with the superintendent. Techniques for enhancing the productivity of board meetings, including maintaining effective communication, are provided in chapter 4. The fifth chapter examines the process by which decisions are made. Chapter 6 covers the public relations interests of both the individual member and the board. Eight suggestions for dynamic leadership are offered in chapter 7. The final chapter reviews several typical situations that can affect board members positively or negatively. Appendices provide sample forms that board members can use to organize their activities. (PGD)

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when do we talk about Kids

by Molly McGee

EA 019 062

The Complete Board Book

When do we talk about kids?
The Complete Board Book

by
Molly McGee

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Foreword

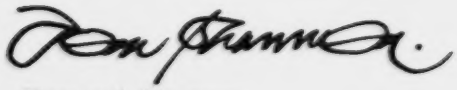
When do we talk about kids?

Is there a school board member who hasn't asked that question? Certainly, there is no more important a question for board members to ask. Board deliberations and policy always should be focused on what is in the best interests of the children.

Experienced board members know, however, that a board's effectiveness can be undermined by a variety of factors. Consider the negative effects of poor interpersonal relationships among board members, between the board and the superintendent, or between the board and the community. Consider what happens when board members don't know the scope of their responsibilities. Consider the ineffectiveness of board members who don't have the leadership skills to accomplish what needs to be done.

When Do We Talk About Kids? was written to help board members become personally involved in honing their skills and establishing their individual leadership style and potential. Molly McGee uses her own experiences as a school board member and educational consultant to provide board members with straightforward advice on boardsmanship that focuses on educating our children.

Very truly yours,



Thomas A. Shannon
Executive Director
National School Boards Association

Preface

When I decided to run for the Anaheim Union High School District Board of Trustees more than a decade ago, I made a decision that would change my life forever.

I began campaigning when I was only 18. A year later, success at the polls! At 19 I was elected and seated on the board. With the beginning of my first campaign, I embarked on a learning experience that could not be compared with any other—and I have learned much more than I ever imagined possible.

The myriad of crises I survived during the ten years I served on the Anaheim board included a seige of a board out of control, three superintendents, labor disputes, and a community recall (fortunately not mine) along with all of the problems inherent in a school system experiencing a decline in enrollment from 38,000 to 24,000 students. This dramatic decline meant school closures and personnel layoffs.

In surviving and growing through my board career, much of the help and counsel I received came from veteran board members and professional associations. The greatest source of information, however, came from living through the experiences.

In the past several years, I have received many requests for assistance from school-related organizations. I have had the privilege of speaking to over 10,000 school board members and administrators. I also have served as a troubleshooter for boards experiencing interpersonal communication failures and problems with board-superintendent relations. Much of the material in this book was designed for these programs and workshops. Based upon the requests for assistance and speaking engagements, I realized that many more board members could benefit from this information if it was published.

In my heart, I believe that the future of public education rests with school board members. But board members must be up to the challenges and pressures. Thus, this book was written with the desire to help dedicated citizens to better serve their communities and their schools.

Molly McGee
March 1986

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Ten Commandments for school board members

(with all due respect to the original author and His agent, Moses)

I. Thou shalt be honest and fair to all who appear before you or have business with your school district.

II. Thou shalt keep thy mouth shut about closed sessions.

III. Thou shalt read thy agendas and board materials carefully prior to the school board meeting.

IV. Thou shalt act or give direction only when seated with the board at a school board meeting. Thou art only one board member, not the big cheese.

V. Thou art an elected official given the trust of the people and the responsibility for the education of the youth. Do not forsake thy job for hidden interests or political gain.

VI. Thou shalt not negotiate with thy unions. Negotiations are the responsibility of the staff thou hast selected. Thou wilt mess up the contract if thou interfereth.

VII. Thou shalt not grandstand or use thy position to gain. Thou art chosen to govern and lead, not to profit personally.

VIII. Thou shalt evaluate fairly those who serve you. Thou shalt put aside any personal feelings or prejudices. Thou art a policy maker, not an administrator.

IX. Thou shalt honor thy community, students, and staff. Thou shalt listen to their concerns, correct problems, and provide answers. The problems of thy children shall be kept in perspective.

X. Thou shalt work to improve thy leadership skills and talents. Thou art not infallible. Thou can always learn new tricks.

Molly McGee

CHAPTER ONE

So now you are elected . . . Which way to go?

Every year we see a large turnover of school board members. Veteran board members are defeated at the polls, retire from public service, or move on to other positions in the community. In almost every state of the union, I have had the chance to meet some of these new board members as well as veterans—excited, challenged, and dedicated people. They have the desire to make a difference. Their most common question is *how*. Now that I am elected, which way do I go?

Perhaps the first place to start is exactly where you are. Admitting that you are not yet an expert is a healthy sign. When you begin to feel like an expert, look in the mirror. Every year you will learn more and more. Congratulations on your quest.

The role of the board member

Perhaps you have met with the most favorite phrase of your colleagues and superintendents by now:

"BOARD MEMBERS SET POLICY; THEY DO NOT ADMINISTER THE SCHOOLS."

I always have had an aversion to that phrase. Too often it was used when I disagreed with the school system's operation. The line between policy making and decision making is indeed a gray one. Each school system, each superintendent, and each board has its own style. The only consensus I have discovered is this: Whatever the board and superintendent agree upon jointly establishes the difference between policy making and administration. What works in Sacramento, Cali-

fornia may be totally unacceptable in San Diego. The differences state to state are even greater.

Take a look at your state education code and the duties, legal rights, obligations, and responsibilities it sets forth. Examine your school board bylaws and board policy manuals. *Do not rely on others to tell you the parameter of your authority*; take their counsel and look for yourself. Ask your state school boards association for information. Ask your state superintendent for additional materials.

The number one rule is: *Conduct your own examination of your role and your responsibility as a board member. No one else can or should do it for you.*

Your personal effort in finding out about your job will be invaluable to you. Relying on your current colleagues, your supporters, and your school system administration is not enough. Responsible leadership is a personal search. Pretend you are from another state. Don't accept information blindly as fact. Make them show you. Use the following sections to guide your search.

Board member job description and legal responsibilities

Legal duties and responsibilities

Meeting Responsibilities: (How often . . . How do I have to be notified . . . Special meetings . . . What is a quorum . . . location . . . special requirements . . . How are officers selected . . . When?)

The law outlines the following as board member obligations:

Educational: (What must I do for the school system?)

Financial: (What authority do I have over budget and school finance . . . Who sets fees/tax rates?)

School requirements: (What classes are we mandated to provide . . . Are there state imposed class sizes, graduation requirements?)

Employer-employee relations: (What role do I play in teacher, administrator, and support staff contract negotiations . . . Do we have collective bargaining in this state . . . Who handles la-

bor disputes . . . Who is our negotiator . . . What is the current contract status?)

Community relations: (What types of committees or commissions do we have the right to appoint . . . Are there any mandated advisory committees . . . Do we have any joint meetings with city, county, or state officials?)

From the federal government: (What affirmative action requirements must we meet . . . What public laws are important to my role as a board member . . . special education . . . equal opportunity employment . . . bilingual/bicultural education?)

Form filing: (What types of forms am I required to file with my county or state every year?)

Employment of the superintendent: (Who evaluates the superintendent . . . What kind of a contract does the superintendent have . . . What was the superintendent's last evaluation like . . . Who does the superintendent answer to?)

From your own board policies or bylaws

How are meetings run? (Do we follow *Robert's Rules of Order* . . . Do we have an established agenda . . . How do I get an item on the agenda . . . When are agendas printed . . . delivered . . . Can we take action on items not listed on the printed agenda . . . Is there an addendum printed prior to the board meeting . . . What is the deadline for placing items on the agenda or addendum?)

Who can speak at a board meeting? (Is there an opportunity for concerned citizens to speak to items on the agenda . . . off the agenda . . . Is there a place on the agenda for board member reports?)

Are meetings taped?

Executive or closed sessions

Does the law limit what can be discussed in closed sessions?

Who participates in closed sessions?

Is there an agenda for closed sessions? Are minutes kept?

Must all information presented in closed session be kept confidential? What if a board member or administrator discloses

such information? What should I do if someone violates the rules or reasons for a closed session?

School visitations

Is there a procedure board members should follow when visiting campuses?

May board members visit and observe in classrooms?

Expulsions or suspensions and discipline

Do we have a discipline policy?

What is my role in such matters?

Who suspends . . . expels?

How can these decisions be amended?

Conference attendance

Do we have a policy regarding our attendance at conferences, conventions, or workshops?

Who can go?

Does the school system pay for us to attend? In state or out of state?

The nicest part about writing your own book is that you can impart your personal philosophy to the readers. I will try to use that liberty wisely.

During my first two years as a board member I felt like a two year old; everytime I touched, asked, or questioned, I was told "no." It was not until I got fed up with being told no that I began to question with facts.

The answers to the preceding questions will give you information that is essential to your performance as a board member. Take time to find out the answers yourself. If people think you don't do your own research, they may snow you or misdirect you.

Take a look at your board policies, especially those covering:

Board meetings
Agenda planning and preparation
Public hearings

Closed sessions
Discipline
School attendance
Conference attendance
Negotiations
Field trips.

Further points to ponder

Does your school system participate in federally funded programs? If yes, which ones? If not, why not?

What are your school system's graduation and promotion requirements? When were they last reviewed?

What types of publications are available to board members? Is there a professional library?

Does the school system have its own lawyer or how do we obtain legal services?

Employee contracts or agreements: Which ones, with whom? Do I have copies?

School system publications: What are they? Can board members contribute ideas or articles?

Liaisons with civic and professional groups: Do we have any? Who serves as liaison?

Committees: Are there subcommittees? Advisory committees? How do they operate?

In addition to your own research, I suggest that you schedule a personal appointment with your superintendent. Find out these things:

The superintendent's education, background, and goals.

How the superintendent feels about board-superintendent relations?

Agenda preparation—What does the superintendent expect from you?

Is there clerical support for board members?

What can you do to work cooperatively with the superintendent?

What do you expect from the superintendent?

What are the major problems facing your school system?

How does your school system rate in state and national student testing?

Does your school system have a public relations program?

Are there curriculum areas that need revision?

What is the status of labor relations?

Does your superintendent have an open door policy with board members?

Does your board conduct an annual evaluation of the superintendent and a board planning meeting?

Does your school system have a written set of goals and objectives?

Is there a master plan for the next five years?

What are the enrollment projections for the next five years?

Oftentimes, election campaigns generate bad feelings between the superintendent and the board. In some cases, prospective board members have even campaigned against the superintendent. Unless you are planning to remove the superintendent immediately, I suggest that you schedule a meeting and ask these questions. Watch the way you do it. Show you mean business, but do not treat the superintendent in a manner different from how you would like to be treated. You have to establish a working relationship immediately. You have a right to be treated with respect and honesty. The superintendent has the same right.

One of the worst phenomenons I witness when working with school boards is when boards and superintendents forget their respective roles. Do not handle this aspect of board-superintendent relations lightly. It is critical to the success of your school system. (This important relationship is discussed further in Chapter Three.)

Also schedule an appointment with your board president. Discuss the same items you discuss with your superintendent, with the following additions:

Suggest changes you feel might help the board.

Review your goals as a new board member.

Ask if your board has ever conducted a board evaluation. If not, why not? If yes, ask to see it.

Spend time getting to know your president. Seek mutual understanding. If you have had political differences, express your desire to work together. You don't have to capitulate on your feelings, but you need to be able to communicate openly. If your board president can't let bygones be bygones, you do it.

Rule number two: *Do your homework and be prepared at board meetings. Do not shoot from the hip.*

I am often amazed at how few board members spend time in study and preparation for board meetings. This is your chance to show your leadership skills. Don't take it lightly.

To prepare for board meetings:

1. Read the entire agenda and all exhibits.
2. Reread it and make notations of questions or concerns.
3. If you need further clarification, request it in advance. Give your staff a chance to prepare responses when possible.
4. If you have concerns, do some research to determine alternative approaches.
5. Show enthusiasm and concern. The only time you have real authority is when you are seated at the board table with your board. Take every opportunity to impress your staff, colleagues, and audience with your dedication and concern. You choose to be a board member. Do not take your duties lightly.

To many people, being elected or appointed to public office is a significant honor. I cannot ever forget the excitement and pride I felt upon being elected and re-elected.

As a board member you are entrusted with the most precious resource we have—our nation's children. In campaigns, people oftentimes run on controversial issues or timely events in our schools. Following your election, you need to reflect upon your entire agenda for your tenure in office. What do you want to happen? Spend time determining how much

A sampling of board member duties and responsibilities

Taking time to uncover your duties and responsibilities is guaranteed to be of long-term benefit to you. Some examples of board member responsibilities are:

- To select a competent professional to serve as superintendent.
- To establish guidelines and policies for the administration of the school system.
- To provide leadership and direction to the superintendent in order that he or she may administer the schools.
- To represent the views of students, parents, and taxpayers in matters relating to education.
- To review and monitor the business affairs and finances of the school system.
- To be honest, ethical, and fair when dealing with all employees and constituents.
- To provide citizens with an open door to express praise, concerns, and problems to school system officials.
- To monitor personnel actions and standards, assisting in the selection of personnel when requested.
- To approve job descriptions and assignments of the administrative and teaching staffs.
- To approve or deny appointments to administrative positions.
- To approve all labor contracts and agreements between the school system and its employee organizations or labor unions.
- To carry out all legal duties of school board members.
- To review existing and proposed courses of study.
- To examine, analyze, and approve the school systems's annual budget.
- To act as a board rather than as individuals in conducting school system business.

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A sampling of board member duties and responsibilities, *continued*

- To work cooperatively with the superintendent in maintaining good community relations and liaisons with other elected officals.
- To monitor legislation affecting education; to assess the impact of proposed legislation and to provide resource information to legislators.
- To treat board members and the superintendent in a professional manner at all times—but especially during disagreements.
- To publicly support the administration and the efforts of all personnel.
- To evaluate the superintendent regularly and offer commendation and suggestions for improvement.
- To hold the superintendent accountable for goals, objectives, and actions.
- To maintain the confidentiality of student and employee records and information.
- To avoid rumors and discussions that belittle, harass, or reflect poorly upon school system staff or students.
- To attend board meetings and school events and make school visitations; to be visible and available to parents and community.
- To keep abreast of current trends in education and the activities of professional associations.
- To provide patrons with information for referrals and assistance when requested.
- To constantly remember that you were elected to provide the children of your school system with the best possible education. Never lose sight of your main goal.
- To evaluate all decisions based upon their benefit to the education of the children and their long term effects.

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A sampling of board member duties and responsibilities, *continued*

- To review long-range planning and prepare the school system for future generations.
- To remain impartial; to treat all employees, patrons, and citizens with equal concern and action.
- To recognize the influence of your opinions and conversations; to maintain your position with dignity and purpose.
- To set a role model for young people of conscientious, dedicated, and committed elected leadership.
- To recognize the potential for conflict of interest and to keep your personal and financial obligations apart from your actions; to act only in the best interest of the school system.
- To maintain honest, straightforward relationships with news media representatives.
- To work constructively for the improvement of the educational system.

time you are willing to devote to your new role. Prioritize the areas that you want to learn about. Plan your future.

In my travels I meet extraordinary people serving on school boards. Sometimes they start losing their zest and drive. Don't let this happen in your board career. You can avoid this pitfall by planning and setting realistic goals and expectations for yourself. (The Appendices include some sample forms that may help you to organize your goals, responsibilities, and efforts as a board member.)

Following my election, I managed to work the subject of my elected position into each and every conversation I had. I wanted everyone to know that I was their school board member. It is easy to become impressed with your new status and influence. Keep in mind that you are the E.F. Hutton of your school system. When you speak—people listen.

People assume you mean what you say and that your opinions represent facts and actual plans. How easy it is to forget that your opinions are no longer your own. Calvin Coolidge once said, "I have never been hurt by what I didn't say." Keep

that in mind. Careers and programs have been ruined by casual cocktail conversations or supermarket chats.

Had I not watched what occurred when a school board forgot its responsibilities, this section would not have the value I place upon it. Some of the grossly unprofessional conduct I witnessed included:

- Board members entering administration offices after hours to snoop around for information;
- Personal phone calls to administrators threatening their jobs and promising disciplinary actions;
- Illegal and unethical review of confidential documents and files;
- Individual board members circumventing the directions of the superintendent and giving orders to principals and staff directly;
- Promises and employee appointments being made without following school system policies and procedures.

If you are fortunate enough to serve in a community that has been blessed with good, strong educational leadership from the board and the superintendent—congratulations. It is my fondest desire that you are never a part of counter-productive activities such as I have described.

If you are not so fortunate, remember: You can choose the style of leadership you want to have. Let your personal integrity and actions speak for themselves.

Rule number three: *Keep your ego in check.*

In the past, school board members in large urban cities have been given staff, salaries of $12,000 per year and above, and even chauffeured automobiles. These perks are few and far between today. Many boards serve without pay entirely or receive a small monthly stipend. Still, some board members hear strains of "Hail to the Chief" playing softly in the background. Remember—despite the honors and influence, you are merely a citizen who wants to improve the educational system.

Humility is a definite asset. Try not to become overly awed by your position.

CHAPTER TWO

Your fellow board members or . . . How could they elect me and them?

With new school board members being elected or appointed every year, it is likely that at some time during your board career you will find yourself serving with people quite different from yourself. At times I could not believe that the same voters who elected me also could have elected my colleagues.

The relationships and communications channels you maintain with your fellow board members are extremely important. You as an individual have no authority. It is only when a majority of the board (or two-thirds, depending on the issue and your laws) agrees and takes action that directions can be given or acted upon.

No matter how well or how poorly your school board works together, you have the potential to improve or change that situation. For over four years I got first-hand experience in split boards and abuses of authority. Until serving as a troubleshooter or facilitator for boards in other states and cities experiencing similar situations, I would have thought my problems were unique. I have served on a board that voted:

4-1 (me being the 1)
4-1 (me being part of the 4)
3-2 (me being the loudest part of the 2)
3-2 (me being a part of the 3)
2-2-1 (me holding each position).

It is important to clarify this vote statement. Board votes shouldn't always come out the same—my side versus their side. Even during our worst times in Anaheim, we usually could agree on approving the minutes. Each vote should be based upon the merits of the issue. My concern is with boards that become divided or split along major issues with the result that battles ensue.

The dangers involved in a split or divided board cannot be underestimated. Rather than considering the merits of actions, votes are based upon personal allegiances and agendas. In Anaheim, we witnessed the departure of two superintendents and some key staff people as a result of board divisions.

Split boards can occur at any time. Wise boards recognize the need to agree to disagree and to hold to issues—not to personalities. Many times the splits in my own school system, and in others I've witnessed across the country, were not motivated by political or philosophical differences. Sadly, they often were the result of hurt feelings or wounded pride. Our schools deserve better leadership than such situations offer.

In my zeal and enthusiasm as a member of a split board, I became a self-righteous crusader. It was my personal responsibility to stop improper actions and votes. With only one supporting colleague, I endured countless board meetings, was kept unaware of actions contemplated or directives given to the superintendent and staff, was not privy to information essential to being a good board member, and actually was harassed and slandered by some colleagues.

At that time I saw the only solution to be counterattack. Today, I see a different solution.

Whether you are in the majority or minority of your board, you have the opportunity and challenge of bringing your board together. While you may never cement true friendship or respect, you can play an important role in facilitating an end to the division.

Could I really have brought the Anaheim board together? Never. But what I could have done was to cool down the open warfare and try to restore sanity. By not accepting that my actions could be adding to the problem, I was not able to be part of the solution.

You do not have to:

like,
enjoy,
always agree with,
entertain,
love,
respect, or admire your colleagues.

What you have to do is to allow them the opportunity to work cooperatively with you in setting the policies in your school system. The best way to bring this about is by being a good example or role model. Do not be tricked into unprofessional conduct. You can control your actions and you can maintain your sense of integrity.

Split boards do not always revolve solely around the board and superintendent. Outside employment, families, churches, organizations, political parties, and special interest groups also can get into the picture. Following the "board wars" in Anaheim, I founded a nationwide organization called *Veterans of Board Wars*. I named myself commander-in-chief. Take a few moments to read the pledge:

> *I agree to use my position as a school board member or superintendent to work fervently to better the public schools of my community. I will not engage in improper conduct nor verbal warfare with my colleagues. I will conduct myself in a manner becoming my office. I will strive for the highest ideals of leadership. I will continue to work for those causes in which I believe, but will do so in a way that will show respect and understanding to my constituents and colleagues.*

If you agree—join. The survivors and casualties of these often ridiculous confrontations always are our children. Educational quality declines dramatically during conflict between boards, superintendents, staff, and community. Don't allow your children to experience this. One board member can cause a great deal of trouble or good. You decide.

One of the ways in which you can work to maintain good board relationships is to profile your fellow board members (see box). Knowing who your colleagues are and their leadership styles can be an invaluable tool. The information

should not be used to help you manipulate or scheme, but to provide you with understanding.

Remember, you are not trying to join the CIA or FBI. The purpose of profiling your colleagues is to help you work more cooperatively. There are no right or wrong answers. Be cautioned, however, that this information should be kept private. It is designed to help you improve interpersonal communication skills, not to create new rifts.

You have the opportunity to make a difference in the future of education!

What difference can profiles of your colleagues possibly make?

While you may disagree strongly with philosophies, political leanings, and styles of child rearing, you also may have some areas of agreement. Let's take a look at what value doing a profile on each of your board colleagues can have for you and your school system by looking at each area.

Age

Perhaps I feel age is a more important consideration than most. I was elected when I was 19 years old and spent years trying to overcome the prejudice and preconceived notions of a few colleagues.

Age does not determine good or bad. It gives you an idea of where your colleague is coming from. Public schools were very different in the twenties than in the thirties—and the sixties and seventies had their own styles. Every decade and the experiences its graduates had in the public schools influences the opinions of citizens and board members. Sometimes we manage to remember only what we choose to about the educational institutions we attended.

Look at the age of your colleagues. What were public schools like when they attended? How often I have reflected that one of the reasons controversial issues in education are so emotional and heated is because we all feel we are experts about the public schools. We all have first-hand knowledge and memories.

Consider where your colleagues are in life. Does their age signify that they are just beginning or finishing their employment or family careers. Each of us faces pressures and hurdles at stages in our lives. These events often color our

Board member profile

Good communication occurs on a board when its members work well with each other. The key to success is respect and understanding among members. How well do you know your board colleagues?

Name _____

Approximate age _____ Years on board _____

Occupation _____ Religion _____

Education _____ Spouse _____

Children _____

Hobbies _____

Civic affiliations _____

_____

Social affiliations _____

_____

Pet peeves _____

_____

Reasons for being a board member _____

_____

Political leanings _____

Pet projects _____

Communication style: teller / asker / listener / observer / activist

What do we have in common? _____

_____

perceptions and actions. Stress and tension can cause anyone to act in an unusual manner. Until I became a mother, for example, I never realized the time and attention parenting takes. Try to think of what is happening in the lives of your colleagues. Babies at home—kids going off to college—unemployment—job promotions—financial worries—all play a part in human performance.

Length of time on the board

Perhaps you have met or are one of those board members with 10-plus years on your board. Those years and experiences help to shape opinions. Long-term members have been through some crises several times. Take a look at your veterans and rookies.

Aften ten years, I made the decision to retire. (Not bad, to have your first retirement dinner at 29.) Some of the factors included in my decision were:

Interest—How many is too many board meetings? Have they lost their zest? Is there still a commitment to board service?

Time—Have other responsibilities eroded or changed the time available to commit to board work?

Children—Are the children finished with school? Have new challenges appeared?

Endurance—I have two standard rules: 1) As long as I live I hope never again to have to watch a group of students present the play *Our Town*; and 2) I hope never again to have to listen to patrons or friends asking me "Why can't kids read today?" In both cases, my tolerance and endurance are gone. You need to have endurance to watch programs to completion and wait for change to occur. What has happened during your colleagues' years on the board? How has that influenced them? How is their endurance holding up?

Occupation

While the majority of school board members are well educated, most are not professional educators. According to the 1985 *American School Board Journal*-Virginia Tech survey of school board members, the highest percentage (62.3 per-

cent) of board members hold professional or managerial positions. They are lay members of the education community.

What do the occupations of your board colleagues suggest? Are they used to working alone or with a team? Do they have management or employee relations training or experience? Have they ever supervised anyone, had budget responsibilities, been required to set goals and objectives, handled negative confrontations or controversy, been in a leadership or support position?

Oftentimes, serving on a school board may be a person's first executive experience.

Religion

What? Yes, I said religion. Many of us have values and traditions that we have received through our religious affiliations. Some denominations and faiths encourage people to seek elected office, and some even try to influence the decisions of the school board!

What are the religious affiliations of your board colleagues? Do they affect board member actions?

Education

The 1985 *Journal*-Virginia Tech survey revealed that 65.6 percent of responding board members completed four or more years of college; 30.4 percent of that group had earned advanced degrees.

Do your colleagues have a college education? Do they value the benefit of a college degree? Is real-world experience more important to them? Did they have positive or negative school experiences? Are they impressed or unconcerned by academic titles and honors?

In working in other school systems, I have found that conflicts have occurred because of white collar—pink/blue collar differences. Sometimes the folks with more education lord it over the others. To retaliate, those who did not choose or were not able to attend college downgrade the value of a college degree. What do your board members' educational backgrounds suggest to you?

Spouse

Sometimes in my seminars I tease my audience by asking them if anyone ever confuses which spouse is the board mem-

ber. Does your board have any two-board member families? Are spouses an influence, a hindrance? Do board members act independently? Are marriage conflicts or divorce affecting job performance?

Children

Do their kids have influence over your board colleagues? Are they super protective parents? Do they use their influence as a board member when their child is in trouble? Do they base their opinions on their children's experiences in school? Can they see beyond their neighborhood school?

Hobbies

What do your colleagues enjoy doing for relaxation and entertainment? Is being on the school board their hobby? Do they love the battles and the challenges? Does their school board work inhibit or allow them more access to their hobbies?

Hobbies also can pinpoint another aspect. Are they spectators or competitors? Do they enjoy the action?

Civic affiliations

After serving with a board member who was a candidate for higher office, I know first hand aspirations and affiliations can influence a board. Trying to please everyone is impossible. Do your colleagues have higher aspirations? Does that affect their decisions? Do they involve themselves in politically sensitive local issues? Are they aligned with a particular faction of the community? Does their affiliation affect their decisions?

School affiliations

Parochialism or "territorial rights" often are issues in board conflicts. My school (rather than our entire school system) is of prime importance. Board members may try to take care of the school their children attend first. Do your colleagues have any territorial or parochial interests?

Like children, alma maters or neighborhood schools sometimes have powerful significance to us. Do any of your colleagues have strong relationships with schools or school organizations? Are they members or supporters of a special interest group? Bands? Choral Music? Athletics?

Pet peeves

Are there any feminists or dedicated chauvinists on your board? Do your colleagues hate bureaucracies? Do they have any particular dislikes or negative feelings about unions, school teachers, public employees, misuse of tax money? What pushes their action triggers?

Why are they board members?

(How often have you asked yourself that question?) What do they want to accomplish? What does being a member of the school board do for them? Did they want to see a particular result, or did they just want to participate in government?

Fame? Fortune? Ignorance? What encouraged them to seek public office? Whether elected or appointed, people make a conscious decision to be on a school board. No one is forced to become a school board member!

As a seminar handout, I once wrote an IQ test for school board members. One of the questions was on the selection of school board members.

School board members are:
(Circle correct answer)
A Elected
B Appointed
C Chosen by Divine Direction
D A or B

How often do board members act as if their selection was divinely inspired? In all honesty, divine intervention may have played a part in my election to the Anaheim board. An incumbent board member became deeply religious during his tenure. Less than a year following his re-election, he resigned unexpectedly. Since I had just run for the board months before and finished fourth in a field of thirteen candidates for three positions, I was excited to run again. Following my election, this incumbent confided in a local reporter that he resigned because he had *a vision* that I should be elected!

Political leanings

Are they party candidates or leaders? Do they let partisan politics affect their duties? Are they to the far left or right and

you about center? Are you guessing on their leanings? Have you ever seriously discussed politics with them?

Being 19 years old, female, and the only nonparent single board member was unique enough when I first was elected. I also had to constantly counter the preconceived notion that, because I was young, I was a political liberal. I must have been born a moderate! To make matters worse, living in Orange County California (John Wayne Country), I was also a Democrat!

The preconceived notions about my political leanings were totally exaggerated. Are you guilty of assuming without facts? Check it out. Ask questions and get to know your colleagues yourself. Don't accept people's opinions or rumors.

Pet projects

Pet projects are the dividing line in determining leadership skill and potential. Are you or your colleagues motivated by or especially interested in a pet project? Do they love and vote for anything to do with science . . . music . . . football? Are they involved with their own areas of interest rather than the entire school system? Are you?

Pet projects should go on a back burner when you serve on a school board. Are yours or your board's boiling over?

Communication styles

Are your colleagues askers or tellers? Are they listeners or talkers? Observers or activists? Do they prefer to lead or to follow? Examine their styles. Are you similar to them? What do they think you are?

A close examination of communication styles allows you to understand how and why people react to situations. If a board member is a talker and an activist, do they get opportunities? Do they share feelings or bottle them up? Do you recognize this style or ignore it?

What do I have in common with them?

If Homo Sapien was your answer, you definitely have a split board!

What do you have in common? Educationally? Philosophically? Hobbies? Mutual friends? Similar tastes? After some serious probing you may be able to discover some similar in-

terests. These interests may enable you to open lines of communication. It often is easier to respect someone when we share interests.

Profile your board. See if you find a new understanding and, perhaps, increase your respect of your colleagues.

If you feel the profile is unnecessary because you have a great board—STOP. Every board has the potential for becoming a split or divided board. Veteran members usually can recall how life-long friendships were ruined by board disagreements. Do not take your board for granted. Use a little preventive medicine. Your increased awareness may heal the smallest splits.

In addition to understanding your colleagues, another key to effective boardsmanship is goal setting. Does your board ever discuss its goals and concerns? Do you accept the superintendent's goals as yours?

In order to serve well and work as a team, you must have open communication and a working knowledge of where you are going. You are a team. Teams have common goals. These common or jointly agreed upon goals do not take away from your own; they merely increase your chances and your school system's chances for success.

If you are a snow skier, you surely have watched "hotdoggers" on the slopes. Lots of flash and fancy tricks. They go it alone. Do you have hotdoggers on your board? One person can make a difference. One person can bring about change and compromise. But individuals must have the respect and confidence of their colleagues. If you or anyone you know fits the solo profile, take a hard look. Are you building or tearing down?

Do you have or know any "one issue board members" or board members with an axe to grind in a particular area? The discovery of a cure for this ailment would be welcomed everywhere. If you feel you may be a board member with the potential of appearing to be axe-toting or one-issue, do some introspective thinking and self-examination. If it's a colleague, think of how you can present to them more issues or how you may be able to help them to put down the axe. Is there a way? Is there something you can do? Is it worth trying?

By now you have heard more questions than a game show M.C. Why so many?

Seeking answers and examining the whys and hows of boardsmanship allows us to readjust our attitudes and directions. Every few years voters or the governing boards that appoint board members question whether board members will continue to serve or "retire." Self-knowledge and the use of that knowledge to improve your leadership skills enhances your job performance.

Confucius said: *When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.* Perhaps they are one. Leadership requires us to have perseverence, commitment, flexibility, common sense, and a working knowledge of human relations. It only comes through effort. As a recognized leader, you have an obligation to your colleagues and constituents to do an exemplary job. Your board has that same obligation.

If, due to splits or divisions or conflicts between board and superintendent, you are unable to establish goals and two way communication, contact your school boards association, university, or human relations professional. Oftentimes, a skilled third party serving as a facilitator can help turn your board into a team. Many associations offer these services for a nominal fee.

Do not write it off as just politics when a board fails to cooperate. You are setting an example for the entire school system. If you cannot settle your differences professionally, what can you expect of your staff or students?

CHAPTER THREE

The executive team . . . Working with your superintendent

Let's review our progress. First you learned about your job responsibilities. Then we examined your relationships with your fellow board members. Now we will endeavor to put the superintendent's role into perspective.

In many school systems, a superintendent's tenure is measured in years (sometimes in months). The most precarious relationship that exists in a school system is between the board and the superintendent.

In your own employment, have you ever been accountable to between three and eleven people? The tenure of superintendents is directly related to their ability to deal effectively with multiple bosses and to meet their expectations.

At times I have been asked to assist in superintendent screenings. A large urban school system recently conducted a nationwide search for a superintendent and invited me to serve as one of the selection team members. The person conducting the search was a particularly perceptive executive. Before she began to search, she asked all of the school system's advisory councils, employee groups, civic leaders, and school board members what they were looking for. The result was a two-inch-thick document. When I finished reading their expectations, I wanted to add one line: "Able to leap high buildings with a single bound." Only a super hero could meet those expectations.

It is very easy to expect the impossible.

What does your board expect of your superintendent? How does the superintendent know what the board expects? Does each member communicate their own expectations or are they mutually agreed upon? Who gives directions and evaluates progress?

If you are committed to making your school system succeed, your board and superintendent need to work together as an executive team. If the leaders aren't working together, action stops. Not too long ago an intelligent and capable superintendent told me that he was retiring. He was under 60 and highly regarded by his colleagues. But he was tired of dealing with unreasonable board members. He felt he was unable to do his job well with the directions he received from the board. "Too many cooks," he said.

If your board and superintendent are unable to work together and there is no hope of getting together, you may want to remove that superintendent and select a new one. But be prepared to go through the same tribulations with the new superintendent if you fail to work together to stabilize guidelines.

What do you want in a superintendent? Strong Leader? Take charge person? Master teacher? Good manager? Motivator? Decisive? Honest? Fair? Caring? Child oriented? Articulate? Adept at:

Instruction and curriculum
School budget and finance
Operations and plant maintenance
Personnel
Human relations
Community relations
Student testing
Labor relations?

Do you know what you expect your superintendent to do?

Superintendents often accuse boards of wanting to do the job for them. Do you want to be an administrator? Often I have. I have been convinced that I could have done a better job on certain issues.

Your selection of a superintendent and the relationship between the superintendent and the board determines the fate of the school system. Great superintendents have failed be-

cause of unsupportive boards. You cannot expect your employees and students to follow the superintendent if it is obvious that you have little confidence in your chief executive.

Realize that when you, as an individual, approach the superintendent, you are only one board member. It is only when your entire board is seated at an official meeting that authority exists. Keep the following tips in mind in dealing with your superintendent:

- Mutual respect and honest communication are essential. Treat the superintendent as a respected colleague and professional.
- Confine your policy making to the board table. Don't force your superintendent to take orders and directions from individual board members. Do you want individual members to have the authority on their own to give directives?
- Don't play employees against the superintendent. All of your staff reports to the superintendent—not to the board. Give the superintendent the authority and responsibility for evaluation of personnel. Encourage cooperation among employees.
- Your superintendent is a trained professional executive, selected because of training, education, and ability. Superintendents are career executives. Allow them to do their job. How many times do boards spend thousands of dollars to find the perfect superintendent and then, when there is disagreement over one issue, they want the superintendent to do it their way. Board members, however dedicated, usually are not career board members. Their livelihood does not depend upon their board position. They do not have to monitor and watch the operations of the school system every day. Learn to use your superintendent's eyes when looking at the entire system. The superintendent may open your eyes to new situations and issues.
- Regularly evaluate and communicate your concerns. How can a superintendent know what you want if you do not make your intentions known. Few mind readers last long in superintendencies.

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- Keep current on educational issues facing your school system. Learn to use this knowledge to provide your superintendent with information.
- Let the superintendent know what is happening in the community. Often you have information about problems or incidents before the central office does. Let your superintendent know when it happens—not days later.
- Allow your superintendent to bring recommendations and criticisms to the entire board. Allow a give and take. Be open to recommendations for improvement.
- Don't place unreasonable personal demands on your superintendent. At times board members make personal requests of the superintendent. If you are employed, how do you feel when your employer makes such requests of you? What if these requests violate board policy? Do you want special favors? Is it fair to all the children?

And finally—

- Know that everyone is capable of making mistakes. Few board members are as critical of their own actions as they are of the leadership style of the superintendent. Accept the fact that mistakes do happen.

Upon reviewing this chapter, it almost appears that I am pro superintendent and con board members. Such is not the case. But the unfairness of unrealistic expectations bothered me for ten years. Different people have different leadership styles. You do have to give directions, but you also have to give the freedom for the individual to carry out the directions.

Will Rogers said, "All I know is what I read in the newspaper." How many times have I been embarrassed to read about board-superintendent conflicts in the news media. No wonder public opinion of our schools is low. We do not appear as if we can do our jobs. But we can change that image.

Your board and you can easily attain an exceptional relationship with your superintendent. Honesty and openness foster it. Deceit and discord spell trouble. Set the course.

The health of superintendents is interesting to know about. Many have heart problems, gastro intestinal disorders, and suffer from all of the diseases related to stress and tension.

Some superintendents have died during conflicts. Melodramatic? A bit. I want to point out that it is serious business being a board member. It is not a political game or hobby. Don't make unreasonable demands or requests and go home peacefully to watch TV while your superintendent must carry out your instructions. Recognize the significance of your decisions.

You are the boss. Your board is the employer of the superintendent. Don't confuse the roles. Just treat your chief executive the same way you would like to be treated.

When I formed my company, I made a decision that I wanted to treat my employees as I had always wanted to be treated by my employers. Working under tension and impossible work loads does not bring profit to industry. It will not bring quality education to our schools either.

Since life always has two sides, it is amusing that the other side of board-superintendent relations focuses on domineering superintendents. Some board members are afraid to confront their superintendent when they disagree. They follow and are expected to approve the superintendent's recommendations without question. They are given only what the superintendent wants them to have. They attend only the conferences the superintendent recommends and belong only to organizations approved by the superintendent. Really? Yes! This type of activity is as detrimental to our educational system as are unreasonable boards.

Use your talents, time, and position wisely. Don't go blindly tearing down windmills until you are absolutely sure they are not working.

CHAPTER FOUR

In session
Meetings . . . meetings . . . and more meetings

While some may claim that watching television is the favorite pastime of most Americans, I don't agree. I think that the hottest spectator sport is meetings. People have a tendency to meet any time, any place, about any issue. Perhaps you have witnessed this proclivity to meetings in your community. Meetings at one time were the sport of white-collar executives. Now meetings are available to everybody.

Meetings are by far the number one activity for school board members. We have regular meetings, special meetings, annual meetings, closed session meetings, public hearings and forum meetings, organizational meetings, town hall meetings, and meetings to plan other meetings. Since a majority of our time with our board and superintendent is spent during these meetings, it is appropriate that this chapter be dedicated to improving and streamlining our meeting effectiveness.

Prior to becoming a board member, did you attend any school board meetings? For some, this was the activity that encouraged them to seek office. If you attended these meetings, how well were they conducted? Was business transacted in an appropriate manner? Were there opportunities to discuss and exchange information? Were the board and staff professional in their actions? Did they speak in English or in educational jargon? Did they attend to business or digress often? Did they rubber stamp all of the superintendent's rec-

ommendations? Was there much of an audience? Were you greeted warmly?

So many board members and superintendents fail to use the opportunities available during their school board meetings. These meetings provide your board with an excellent opportunity to show your leadership style and fitness.

These suggestions may assist you in conducting board meetings. Read over the list and select those that would be of benefit in your situation.

- Don't do outside activities. Knitting, reading, or other activities can distract your attention. Concentrate on what is going on.
- Show respect to all people and colleagues. Don't allow differences of opinions to get out of hand.
- Don't engage in verbal battles for the sake of battle. Don't talk to hear yourself speak.
- Come dressed and prepared just as you would for any other leadership position. Let your manner and dress speak for itself.
- Watch your body language and eye movements. Sometimes we let our emotions show by our movements. Keep your feelings and emotions professional.
- Be assertive. When you have questions or concerns, state them. Follow the agenda and adhere to your board's operating methods.
- Keep personalities out of the discussion. Address issues and problems—not people.
- Keep your actions focused upon the children: What is in their best interests?
- When votes are called—speak up. Make sure your vote is heard.
- Take stands on issues: Don't waffle around because of pressures or crowds. Do what you believe is right.
- Be genuine. If you agree with someone—tell them. If you disagree, express that also. Say up front what is going on.

- When attacked or confronted—take the leadership role. Be the leader you are; refuse to throw mud. Express your disappointment; tell them it is out of line. Be calm and reasonable.
- Take notes and organize yourself for follow up when necessary.
- Refuse to get involved in side conversations or note writing. Keep centered on the actions at hand.

Earlier, I mentioned "board wars" that transpired in Anaheim. During this time, school board meetings were the best entertainment in town. Lots of action, name calling, and battles could be witnessed each Thursday evening. Oftentimes, we had standing room only. It should be noted that we had radio, television, and print media representatives present at almost every meeting. People in the audience even sported tee shirts showing allegiance and support. It was a public zoo.

At one evening meeting of our school board, an event occurred that changed the entire direction and future of our battling board. When the board majority did not wish to hear complaints or listen to people in opposition to their viewpoints, public hearing times were limited to 30 or 60 seconds per speaker. People vitally concerned about the school system and its future had to concentrate their thoughts. Friends of the board majority were allowed to exceed this time limit; unfriendly voices were not. Fairness was not on the agenda.

Remember, these were not irate employees or outside agitators who wanted to speak. These were mothers and fathers, our neighbors, who wished to be heard.

During one particular evening meeting, a young college student, attired in coat and tie, began making a very well prepared presentation to the board. He challenged the board's activities and the legality of its actions. During his 60 seconds, he respectfully stated his opinions. No matter how respectful or concerned this young man was, however, he refused to end in one minute. He had been waiting several hours while the board was hiding out in a closed session. The board majority demanded he relinquish the microphone. He refused.

Quicker than you can imagine, the board president jumped up and disappeared under the board table. The next picture

the media and the public saw was the board president pulling the plug on the microphone. Later, a recall was held and the board majority was removed from office. I have often wondered if, without the plug-pulling incident, the situation would have remained the same. (By the way, the young man was elected to fill one of the board majority seats.)

The point of this story is to illustrate the importance of conducting good public board meetings. The previous board in Anaheim often showed patrons a complete lack of respect. Either you were for them or against them. Issues were based on personalities, not merit.

Take a good look at your regular board meetings. Evaluate your performance in the following ways:

How would the public rate your actions as one board member? Were you prepared? Did you appear involved and concerned? Did you ask insightful questions? Were you respectful to your colleagues? Did you look like you were there to do business? Did you ever mention or question the value of the proposed projects to the students? Were you open and honest?

Many times board members rush into board meetings. They are harried and tired. They act and look exhausted before the meeting begins. Sometimes they even attend in jogging suits or tennis outfits. Sometimes board members share private jokes and inside information. How does the public view this behavior?

When I was the student representative to the California State Board of Education prior to my graduation from high school, I was invited to serve on a Joint California Assembly and Senate committee. Delighted, I flew to Sacramento, read all the materials three times, and could not wait to sit with these legislators to do business.

I was in for a shock. Two of the committee members slept through the meeting. One member signed his name to letters during the meeting. Another had a transistor radio in his ear listening to the ball game. When the chairman needed a motion, he had to prod or poke his neighbor for it. I was so disappointed. Here I expected leadership in action and I saw laziness and a total lack of interest. That memory remains fresh. Is your board creating similar memories?

Tips for improving communication at school board meetings

- Be positive when you arrive. Leave your personal concerns at home.
- Invite visitors to tell you what they think about issues and plans during your discussions. Put aside a special segment of your meeting to hear comments from the public about nonagenda items.
- Invite local Boy and Girl Scout troops or student organizations to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Have "Welcome to our Meeting" flyers available for first-time visitors. Let this publication describe how your meetings are conducted and identify board members.
- Have an administrator in the audience to answer community questions on how to address the board and to provide backup information to citizens when requested.
- When citizen groups or private individuals address the board, make sure they know you are interested in what they have to say. Look interested; maintain eye contact.
- Send a followup letter or note to every community patron who addresses the board. Thank them for their interest and, if possible, give them further information about their topic.
- Have coffee available to the public.
- Establish a curfew time for public comments.
- Have outstanding students presented to your board for special commendation.
- Have a 15-minute positive presentation on a program in your school system at one board meeting every month. Emphasize your successes.
- Don't talk in *educationese*. Remember, you have an audience that doesn't necessarily know IEP from ADA. Explain terms if you must use them.
- If you are explaining intricate budget formulas, use a chalkboard or overhead.

continued next page

Tips for improving communication at school board meetings, *continued*

- Do not be afraid to admit you don't have all the answers. Always offer to research and DO IT.
- When you have a break in the meeting, go into the audience and speak to your public. Be visible and accessible.
- Have a special section in the meeting room set aside for the media. If possible, have a public information officer available to answer their questions.
- When asked for an interview by the media, answer as sincerely as possible. If you do not know the reporter, everything you say may be taken seriously. Avoid off the record remarks.
- If you are presenting an important item to the board, prepare a news release in advance.
- Learn the names of the media representatives covering your meetings.
- Dress for business. Sloppy attire suggests a lack of concern. You are an executive of a major organization. Act the part. Use good judgment.
- If you are taking a position that is not in support of your administration, be prepared to defend your position. Have backup materials so that you can substantiate your charges or actions. Remember to maintain professional conduct.
- If no news media attend your meetings, call up the city editor following your meeting and offer your version. Keep lines of communication open.
- When board members get along, there is not much news at their meetings. Grandstanding for pure publicity can lower public opinion about your performance as a board member. Evaluate your actions carefully. Don't expect the front page for normal school system business.
- When you speak in your community, invite your audience to attend a board meeting. Tell when and where they are, and why citizens should attend.

Closed sessions: "When they get behind closed doors . . . . "

The topics handled in closed sessions are a favorite mystery in most school systems. The fact that it is secret gives it powerful importance. When studying your duties and responsibilities, give the topic of closed sessions added research. Ascertain exactly what can and cannot occur legally in closed session according to state law. Gain a good understanding of the parameters.

As a general rule across the country, closed sessions can be held only for student hearings, personnel issues, and labor relations. They cannot be used to discuss normal agenda items or issues.

It is up to you as a board member to maintain the law. If the closed session gets out of hand and you remain, you are violating the law. When that happens, you have an obligation to point it out and request that the board return to open session. If board members refuse, you have two choices:

1. Remain and violate the law and your elected responsibilities. By remaining you also may promote continued misuse of closed sessions in the future;

2. Leave and return to the board table or meeting room. If you feel it would be beneficial to the future of the children in your school system, explain to those present why you have returned. If such an action would only cause more discord, say you feel you must leave the session, but do not give specifics. Believe me, your colleagues won't like it if you leave. Show that you mean business. Don't give in to peer pressure. Do what you know is right as an elected leader.

Remember, once you call them to task they will be watching your actions. Don't let your personal projects or issues be inappropriate closed session topics. Lead by example and honesty.

Avoid the kangaroo court

Regardless of whether or not you are in open or closed session, you still are carrying out your elected responsibilities. Keep the closed sessions as professional and organized as possible. When they are for the purpose of evaluating personnel or the superintendent, make sure your board stays on

task. Do not let them digress or use that time to vent emotions. Make sure that you are as professional as possible when dealing with staff people. Don't let closed sessions turn into "kangaroo courts." Judge people according to goals, objectives, and performance of duties, not on friendship or petty squabbles.

Confidentiality is the key. Do not share tidbits of material from closed sessions with family or friends. Do not even discuss the topics. Treat the subjects with serious deliberations. Reputations and futures have been badly damaged by inappropriate sharing of knowledge. Due process is the right of every student and employee. Your sharing of some information could violate that due process.

If you have a talker on your board who loves to disclose closed session news, talk it over one on one. Tell them why you feel it is inappropriate and incorrect. Ask them to refrain from divulging such information. Many people will stop when asked or reminded that the material is confidential.

If your request falls upon deaf ears, talk it over with your board president. Explain your concerns and past conversation. Let the president handle it.

If the news continues to be shared, look into ways of formally censuring the board member for divulging confidential information. Use this tactic carefully. It can be used for political purposes and normally doesn't really do the job. Even if the person continues to divulge this information, retain your commitment to good leadership. Don't fall for their errors and lack of common sense. It can be frustrating, but look to the long-term ramifications of your actions.

Special meetings . . . public hearings . . . forums . . . town hall meetings . . .

School board deliberations can certainly rally a community's interest. Laying off personnel, changing programs, closing schools, establishing new boundaries all can bring crowds to your meetings. Sometimes these crowds are employees showing support for their associations; at other times special interest groups want to show you that they mean business. Welcome them all! These group meetings can be an excellent way to hear your community and patrons. They afford you a

larger audience to impress with your dedication and commitment and knowledge.

Oftentimes crowds frighten boards and administrations. Board members have even been known to schedule meetings in rooms they know will be too small and then call the fire marshall for support in keeping the crowd size down. I find this behavior unacceptable. Don't run from public input. Face it. Listen and take the actions you feel are necessary. Don't play games and ignore your responsibilities.

While serving on a school board, I loved to face audiences. I loved the energy and excitement. Democracy is based upon group participation. I always viewed these types of gatherings as government in action. Professionally, I always perform better to a full house. I think it is the Ethel Merman—"the show must go on"—part of me.

When I was president of the Anaheim board, the decision to close a high school, close three junior high schools, and change from three-year junior highs and high schools needed to be made. We met at the largest school auditorium. We had a full house. The gathered crowd was convinced of one thing: Don't close my school!

The board had not yet made up its mind, but the facts were pretty bleak for our educational future if we kept all the schools open regardless of enrollment or cost. Patron after patron spoke against our recommended action. The meeting was hot and heavy. During a short break, I recognized that my ego and need for approval would have me do what the crowd wanted—please them all—say, "OK, you all came down here, we hear you."

My male colleague said, "Well, Molly, what do you want to do?"

"Keep them all open and happy. But without a doubt that would be detrimental to thousands of students now and in the future. We've got to do the right thing," I replied.

Did we? We sure did. We had to! Responsible leadership allowed us no other options. Recognize that you won't please every crowd by your decisions, but at least let them respect your actions and the manner in which you conduct yourself.

Some guidelines for public hearings and forums

- If possible, plan ahead. Make sure that the facility is large enough and that those attending can hear and see what is going on.
- Have handout information about proposed actions available.
- Come mentally prepared. Realize that crowds are not always loving when they don't agree with you. Treat them with great respect and attention. You are the elected leader. Your responsibility is not to be swayed by opinion, but to research and make competent decisions.
- If security is necessary, arrange for it well in advance. Try to keep the uniformed officers to a minimum.
- Make sure that your administration is preparing a complete presentation for the beginning of the meeting. Oftentimes, groups come without the whole story.
- Listen, take notes, show concern and appreciation. But do not debate the issue. Public hearings and forums, unless specifically to debate an issue, are for the delivery of testimony—not dialogues.
- Speak and act with confidence. Make the best decisions you can and rest easy with them.
- If you are to be interviewed by the media, plan some remarks in advance.
- Unless there is a serious security problem, do not enter or exit by the back door. It appears as if you are intimidated. Show your courage.
- Make sure you show your appreciation for the testimony at the end of the hearing or forum. Reiterate your commitment to public education.

Establish the *Molly McGee Rule*

Years ago, the Anaheim board adopted the "McGee Rule": no more public hearings or deliberations after 11 p.m. Our hearings and meetings were lasting into the early morning hours. Major decisions were being made when fatigue and expe-

diency were ruling us. Set up your McGee rule. Take a look at what the best times for your board meetings would be. Make sure that public input items appear at the top of the agenda, not at the end.

Explore the assistance available from your state association and the National School Boards Association. Some excellent materials have been developed to assist boards in conducting better meetings. Read! Study!

CHAPTER FIVE

The decision-making process

Once the thrill of victory is over, most school board members are faced immediately with the task of making important decisions. Sometimes, before the ink is dry on their certification of election, they must make decisions on issues involving hundreds of jobs or dollars. This chapter endeavors to offer you some suggestions to help in your deliberations.

During my days on a split board, I noticed how often some board members chose to abstain. There is a time and an appropriate place for abstentions. If you have a conflict of interest, if you have no advance knowledge of a proposed action, or if it is a personnel matter and you do not agree but wish to allow the employee the opportunity not to have any no votes cast. Each of these are considerations; they are not always valid reasons.

When making personnel appointments, some board members believe that a unanimous vote is the only fair vote. Let's ponder that concept. What if you do not feel the person is qualified, correct for the position, or the best possible candidate?

Twice in my board career I cast a no vote or abstained on an important appointment. Once, I cast a no vote against a candidate who was selected by our board majority. This person did not have the qualifications nor the experience that the position demanded. I voiced my objections in executive session, but to no avail. The person was removed after less than a year by both the board majority and minority.

The second vote came regarding the selection of a superintendent. I did not feel that the board had made a concerted

effort to locate the best possible candidate. So, rather than saddle this person with a 4-1 vote, I chose to abstain.

Think carefully about your voting power and how you use it. Do your votes really reflect critical thinking on the issues? Do you feel that you should never vote no? Do you abstain when you do not want to make waves? Do you feel that an abstaining vote is the easiest vote?

By now you must have guessed. There are no right or wrong answers. How you use your voting power and decision making is crucial to your performance as a school board member. It is a deciding factor in assessing your leadership skill and ability. It is important to be able to make decisions and accept responsibility for those actions.

The title of this book should give you a good idea of the major criteria you should consider in all board decisions and discussions. What is in the best interest of the children? What is the best decision that I can make for the long-term benefit of these children? How will this decision affect our children?

If you are a member of a unified school board or high school board, you would be most fortunate to have a student member of your board. These young people can contribute a great deal to your deliberations. Like adult board members, some are better than others.

During my tenure, the Anaheim board had the good fortune to have exceptional young adults serving on the board. Their knowledge of the day-to-day life on campuses, their insight into current trends in the younger generation, and their usually unbiased approach to the job makes them worth their weight in gold. While these young people usually do not have a vote, they make their mark by adding insight into critical areas.

When making decisions, here are some suggested criteria:

- Is this action in the best interest of the children of this school system?
- What are the long-range effects of this decision?
- Why is our board contemplating this action?
- Does the administration provide backup material that provides solid evidence in support of this decision?

- What are the personnel or financial ramifications of our decision?
- Will this decision affect our contracts or labor agreements?
- Has there been an opportunity for staff and/or community input into this decision?
- Does this decision fit well into our overall school system goals and objectives?
- Does this decision give equal benefit to our students and schools. If not, when will other schools/students be allowed to have the same program?
- Is there a system of evaluating the progress of this project or the final outcome?
- Has the administration looked at alternatives?
- Have legal ramifications been researched?

As lay members of the educational community, school board members are in a position to carefully analyze and review programs and projects. We need to be careful to do this in an objective and unbiased manner. Too often, we can judge based upon our school experiences or those of our children. Quality leadership requires that we take our own experiences and feelings into consideration—but our final decision needs to be based upon our best critical thinking.

Election fever sometimes hits boards. Prior to an election, controversial or major issues become footballs. Instead of judging critically, the only criterion is a test of public opinion or sentiment. As a realist, I know that will never cease. But as an advocate of ethical leadership, I hope it becomes less and less frequent.

When accepting advice and opinions from employees, friends, or others in the community, take into consideration these factors:

- Does this person have the same background information that I have?
- Does this person have any self-interest in this issue?
- How did this person get their information?

- What difference will the outcome make to them?

For more than ten years, I wanted to make sure that the public and our staff had an opportunity to have input into our decision-making process. I kept my home phone number listed and supported public hearings and forums whenever possible. Time after time, the reasons for the input I received were self-interest or lack of knowledge of the subject. Listen—evaluate the concern or request—then use your best judgment in making the decision.

The foolish and the dead alone never change their opinions.
James Russell Lowell

You have a right to change your opinions. No one wants to have such concrete opinions that they cannot be affected by new information or ideas. Too many times, it is easier to change an opinion than to stick by it. Making everyone happy is usually preferable—although impossible. Base your changes of opinion on solid criteria. While your public may not like your decision, they do not respect leaders who change their votes to suit the occasion.

Crisis in confidence

If you are having a crisis in confidence with your superintendent or administration, it is imperative that you develop critical thinking skills. Your evaluation of the information they present to you must be based upon objectivity and careful analysis. If you do not believe that the background data is correct or complete, don't accuse them in public of cheating or trying to manipulate your vote. Carefully investigate your allegations. It is much easier to cast doubt by our words than to carefully research the information.

I would like to believe that all superintendents and administrators always provide boards with unbiased, correct material. Most do. Some do not. You need to be professional in your approach. If you are having a crisis in confidence, see if your colleagues agree and try to take action to correct the situation.

Traps and tricks

At times, boards find themselves trapped or tricked into taking actions. The following represents some of these tech-

niques. They do not necessarily come from the superintendent or administration; they can be board or community generated. Avoid them whenever possible.

- Making a major decision involving students, staff, or dollars at one board meeting. "You must make this decision tonight. You can't wait." *Why not?*
- Crisis and emergency decision—deadline is tonight. *What will happen if you don't make the decision?*
- Extension of contract or agreement. *Why weren't you given any background data or time to consider?*
- Background data presented at board meeting minutes before major decision. No time for study or review. *Why didn't they provide material before?*
- No time for staff or public input. We need to move fast. *Why?*

At times, legitimate emergencies and issues need to be acted upon quickly. But evaluate each of these emergency votes. *Is this a pattern in the school system? What would you do if you had more time to decide? What will really happen if you don't do it?*

Boards often are pressured into extending employee contracts or making major decisions because of expediency rather than necessity. Don't let this happen to you. If your superintendent's contract needs to be renewed or evaluated, allow time before it expires. If employee contracts need to be approved quickly, carefully evaluate why.

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CHAPTER SIX

Maximizing your impact . . . Personal and school board public relations

Election years always are a time for renewed interest in personal and school board public relations. We want the media and our communities to know about the good things we have accomplished. Our sudden interest and concern is often suspect. Why are you doing this now? If there was no election, would you still want us to know?

Taking time at every opportunity to maximize your impact and that of your board should be an ongoing activity. Two-way communication is essential for decision making. Leaders seek out information and share information. This chapter will present you with methods to do this.

Your personal public relations

Before beginning a program of improvement, take a few moments to rate yourself on the following:

- Do you appear well informed and prepared at board meetings?
- Do you answer all calls, letters, or inquiries in a timely fashion?
- Are you easily available to concerned staff, students, and community?

- Are you known for your objectivity and fairness?
- Do you maintain good press relations?
- Do people respect your confidentiality?
- Do you have pet projects or schools?
- Do you publicly evaluate personnel?
- Do you confine your actions to the board table?
- Do you have a good sense of rumor?
- Do you grandstand or generate publicity on occasion?
- Would the key opinion leaders in your community know your name and face?
- Do you regularly visit schools or school events?
- Do you go to lots of conferences or conventions?
- Do you belong to civic groups or associations?
- Do you communicate your thanks, congratulations, or commendations to staff and students?

In rating yourself, do you see areas you need to improve? It is often easy to answer yes to most of these questions. But put this self-evaluation through its paces honestly. Put on paper examples of what you have done and when. Be demanding of yourself.

All board members have the responsibility of maintaining their own public relations efforts. Here are some ways to improve or begin yours:

Before each meeting, evaluate yourself. Are you prepared? Have you done your homework? Can you support your decisions? Do your appearance and attitude generate respect? Are you going to be a good role model at your meeting?

Take opportunities to thank, congratulate, commend, or acknowledge your publics.

Write notes to students who:
- Win elections, debates, contests, competitions;
- Receive scholarships, awards, or honors.

Write notes to teachers who:

- Coach teams, advise clubs, lead choirs, bands, drama groups;
- Do special things in their classrooms.

Write notes to administrators who:

- Are promoted or gain advanced degrees or honors;
- Manage great test scores, events, or campus projects.

Take every opportunity to write, call on the phone, or publicly let people know you care about them and that they are doing a good job.

Attend school events—not just football games. Go to plays, debates, performances, class projects, assemblies. Show all areas of the school community that you are interested. Spread your time and attention around. Do not play favorites.

Visit schools. Make a regular schedule of school visitations. Take a good look at classrooms and projects. Show interest; never fault. If you have concerns over something you see, share them with the superintendent and request follow-up.

Make yourself known to legislators or community leaders. Introduce yourself and solicit their opinions and feelings. Invite them to school functions. Keep lines of communication open.

Community organizations—Join or attend their special events. Seek out the leaders and introduce yourself. Congratulate and commend.

Read all school system and local school publications. Know what is happening at each school. Compliment staff on good issues of school newspapers or newsletters.

Keep the media in mind. Make sure they have your phone number. Let them know you are available. Compliment them on good stories or features. Don't try to use them for personal gain.

Some major don'ts

Don't expect star treatment at everything you attend. Be a gracious guest.

Don't demand time on a program to speak or to be introduced. Only speak when invited.

Don't threaten, criticize, or be negative about issues, people, or events.

Don't make nonpolitical events into political events.

Don't ask for schedules to be changed to suit your personal convenience.

Don't ask for special parking or seating privileges.

When first elected, I was quite impressed with myself. I hardly let an opportunity go by without letting people know that I was there. Until I saw a board out of control, I never realized how we appear to our publics. Some staff and community members hoped we would not attend their functions. Graduations became pure torture for administrators. Board members used these occasions to make long-winded speeches. Principals who "snubbed" a board member or failed to pay sufficient homage were in trouble. God forbid your program was for kids—not adults!

Use common sense and courtesy. Use the opportunities you have, but don't demand those you don't have. Be available, visible, and positive. Check your attitudes and appearance often. How do you look to people? Angry—sloppy—tired?

Never assume that everybody knows you and should. Be the first to extend your hand. Say, "Hello, I'm Molly McGee."

The only secret there is to positive personal public relations is attitude. Be a gracious, dynamic, positive person. Reflect this in all your actions. Let your attitude be one that people admire and respect.

Board public relations

Every time your board is in session or jointly attends functions, your public relations skills are on view. How does your board score? Positive or negative?

- Are your meetings on time and professional?
- Do you take time to acknowledge students and staff?
- Do you treat each other with courtesy and respect?
- Do you appear on task or uninterested?
- Do you give the public opportunities to speak?

- Do you eat in public during board meetings?
- Do you keep the public waiting through long closed sessions?
- Do you laugh or share private jokes?
- Do you talk to hear yourselves speak?
- Do you digress from the issues?

Board meetings are ideal places to perfect your school board's public relations skills. Use each meeting to invite people to attend and participate. Some ideas your school board can use to improve its public relations are:

- Invite students and parents whenever possible. Have students lead the Pledge of Allegiance or invocation.
- Invite students for a board commendation. Invite individuals and whole teams or groups.
- Have student organizations come before you and present five-minute reports on their activities.
- Honor your PTA or parent organization leaders once a year. Thank them for their efforts.
- Schedule special commendations for school volunteers. Let them know you care.
- Invite student council members to share their views.
- Have the entire board tour the school system together. Have informal rap sessions at schools.
- Honor employees for good suggestions and ideas. Let them know you appreciate their time and talents.
- Acknowledge your audience. Thank them for attending.
- Have outstanding employees appear before you for commendation.
- Honor retiring employees for their dedication.
- Commend civic groups on their service to youth.
- Have special forums for legislators, civic leaders, parents, to discuss the status of the schools.

- Poll staff, students, and citizens. Find out how your community feels about the schools.

These are only a handful of ways with which you can maximize your board impact. Don't be fooled into thinking each of you are judged as individuals. Your board's actions and attitudes are very important in your evaluation.

Be public relations wise. Join the National School Public Relations Association, and read its excellent materials. Attend some conference programs on public relations. Develop your own style of effective communication.

Never lose sight of the fact that your actions always will speak louder than your words.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Suggestions for dynamic leadership

How exciting it is to have the opportunity to serve your community. How quickly that thrill can become a chore. You have to make the effort to improve your leadership potential.

You are the key to your board future. Your tenure will be exactly what you make it. You will be known for your leadership or lack of direction. No one can make you a dynamic leader. It is up to you!

You choose to be a member of the school board. It is a personal decision. You can choose not to be at any time. Your election only validates your choice and allows you to serve. No one is a born leader. Each of us must make our own path to effective leadership.

The intent of this book is to give you some insights into good boardsmanship. But this chapter is designed specifically to give you some insights into dynamic leadership—not run of the mill skills, but dymamic skills. Read it carefully and then chart your course.

Dynamic leadership

Are you an effective leader? Do people listen when you speak? Do people seek you out for your opinions? Do you inspire confidence? Do people feel threatened or afraid to approach you? Do you view yourself as a little better than average?

Dynamic leaders lead. People follow their requests and actions. Their intelligence and integrity are respected. Their honesty, fairness, and commitment are known.

How can you become a dynamic leader?

1. *Assume the position.* Take hold of your elected position and learn how to be a dynamic leader. Acknowledge personally that you are a leader. You would be amazed how many board members don't really accept their leadership position. They are just concerned citizens who want to help kids. Can you really expect to do for our children what needs to be done without demonstrating leadership?

2. *Learn to communicate well.* Improve your public speaking skills. Take opportunities to speak to groups.

3. *Plan your future.* Don't merely go from board meeting to board meeting. Plan what you will do. (A sample of a board member's goal setting sheet is included in the Appendices.) Set goals for your board career. Set timelines. Know the direction in which you are going.

4. *Study leadership styles, techniques, and examples.* Look at leaders you admire. What can you do to be more like them? Read and study about leadership. History is full of good and bad examples. Take time to study the qualities of leadership.

5. *Be honest with yourself.* What do you really want to do as a board member. What are your personal goals along with your board goals. Take time to really understand the direction in which you are heading.

6. *Do a personal evaluation.* Do you have the appearance that you want? Leadership takes energy. Do you have any health problems you can improve or eliminate? Do you take care of yourself? Recognize how others view you and how your appearance may influence their opinions.

7. *Set up a support network.* Assemble some people you admire and respect to assist you. Ask for their help and opinions. Listen to their suggestions and comments.

8. *Let your actions speak loudly on your behalf.* Every time you come in contact with people, let them leave with a strong, good opinion. They may not agree, but you were honest and direct. Practice leadership at home, in the office, at the baseball game, and at the board table.

Dynamic leadership is a lifestyle, not an action. It is living the kind and quality of life you believe in. I have always believed that it is better to wear out than to rust out! It is satisfying to know that you are making the most of each opportunity. Go for it! It is within your reach.

CHAPTER EIGHT

In conclusion

This book was written with the hope that you will be the kind of school board member who brings our entire educational system forward. You have the skills. Just learn to use them well. Be a self-learner and a seeker.

This chapter contains some items to trigger your attention and help you to fulfill your responsibilities.

Conferences

Some candidates use the conference attendance of incumbents as an election issue. They swear they will never be a junketeer. What will your activities be regarding conference and convention attendance?

Moderation is the answer. Not all conferences and meetings are necessary. Read over all materials carefully. Decide which conference will really help you to do your job better. Consider options: If you don't attend, how will you get this knowledge?

A common error board members make is to talk more about the social than the educational aspects of a conference. Choose your words well.

Board relationships

Oftentimes, lifelong friendships are made or broken on school boards. Realize that your colleagues and you have a job to do. Decide that your relationship at the board table will be one of respect and cooperation. Don't allow your feelings to get in the way of your duties.

Board/superintendent friendships

I have been fortunate to have had friendly relationships with all of the superintendents with whom I have worked. It is to

your advantage to remember that this relationship is not based on feelings, but professional obligations. Allowing a too close relationship may not permit you to have the objectivity necessary to evaluate fairly.

Labor relations

Whether or not your state permits collective bargaining, boards frequently must deal with labor disputes and grievances. Remember your role in this process. You are only one board member when not seated with your board. You are not an expert at labor relations. Learn as much as you can about the subject. Make sure that the wishes of your board are being negotiated, but do not try to intervene or negotiate yourself.

Inside information

Your role gives you an ear to hear a great deal of inside information. Sometimes this information is about people, sometimes about issues. Adopt a style for dealing with this inside information. Should it be passed on to the superintendent or forgotten?

Authority

Don't be fooled by thinking you can use your authority to assist your children or friends. Many times you can make some impact, but what will you lose in the process? Always ask yourself: Would I want anyone else to take this action?

Crisis

How will you handle your first crisis or calamity? Do you have any plans in the event of a school emergency, strike, or disaster? Ask your superintendent for assistance.

Clerical support

Does your school system have any provision for the clerical needs of board members? Who will type your letters? Do you need any other assistance? Talk this over with your colleagues.

Consultants

What is your policy on the use of outside consultants in your school system? Do you see the need for it? Does any other

agency offer free consultant services? Decide what your criteria will be for determining the need and qualifications of outside consultants.

Board retreats

Board retreats can be an excellent way for a board and superintendent to work out joint goals and objectives. They can be used to bring people together. Some school systems involve the entire management team. But before going, decide whether or not it is necessary. Can we afford it? What can we do there that we could not do at home?

Professional memberships

Do you automatically, year after year, approve your professional memberships? Do you evaluate their worth and value to your school system? Take a good look at these memberships. See what they can do for you.

Benefits

What benefits do you receive as a board member? Salary? Mileage allowance? Conference expenses? Medical insurance? Check out what you can receive as a board member.

Appendices

SCHOOL DATA

Name of School: _____

Nickname: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: ( )

Attendance: _____

Nurse's Office: _____

Library: _____

Principal: _____ Phone: _____

Asst. Principals:

_____ Phone: _____

_____ Phone: _____

Mascot: _____ Colors: _____

Grade Levels: K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

School Opening Time: _____ Classes Begin At: _____

Classes End: _____ School Offices Close: _____

Enrollment: _____

Pupil Population Profile: (Ethnic, Socioeconomic) _____

_____

Historical Facts: _____

Year Founded: _____

Past Honors: _____

Famous Graduates: _____

Special Education Programs: _____

_____

(Continued on Next Page)

Key People: Name Phone

Head Counselor: _____

Athletic Coach: _____

Activity Director: _____

Choir Director: _____

Band Director: _____

PTA/PTO President: _____

Student Body President: _____

Others: _____

School Newspaper Name: _____

Advisor: _____

Editor: _____

Special Honors: _____

Advisory Councils/Committees:

Group	Purpose	When They Meet	Contact Person

Parent Newsletter:

Title	Editor	Dates Published	Distribution

Notes: _____

BOARD MEMBER EXPENSE RECORD

Month: _____ Year: _____

Income

- Salary from District _____
- Honorariums or Fees _____
- Other _____

Total Income _____

Expenses

- Telephone
  - Local Calls/Fees _____
  - Toll Calls/Fees _____
  - Answering Service/Exchange _____
- Mileage (Record on Reverse Side)
- Total Number of Miles _____
- Postage _____
- Clerical Support _____
- Supplies _____
- Subscriptions/Periodicals _____
- Professional Dues _____
- Entertainment _____
- Equipment _____
- Child Care _____
- Printing _____
- Donations:

Date	Organization	School	Amount	Purpose

Donation Total _____

- Seminars and Conferences
  - Registration Fees _____
  - Travel _____
  - Accommodations _____
  - Meals _____
  - Tips _____
- Materials _____
- Other _____

Total Expenses _____

INQUIRY, COMPLAINT, PRAISE REPORTS

Person Calling: _____

Phone: _____ Date _____ Time _____

School or Position: _____

Parent Non-Parent Citizen Employee Media Rep. Student

Re: _____

_____

_____

Names and Positions of Those Involved: _____

_____

_____

School: _____

Date of Incident: _____ Time: _____

Was School Contacted: _____ By Whom?: _____

School Reaction: _____

Caller Requests: _____

_____

_____

Referred To: _____

Further Action: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SCHOOL VISITATION RECORD

Date of Visit: _____ Time: _____ School: _____

Contact: _____ Purpose: _____

Event/Tour/Activity: _____

School VIPs/Staff/Parents/Kids: _____

_____

Commendations: Recommendations:

Notes and Observations: _____

_____

Follow-Up: _____

_____

Date of Visit: _____ Time: _____ School: _____

Contact: _____ Purpose: _____

Event/Tour/Activity: _____

School VIPs/Staff/Parents/Kids: _____

_____

Commendations: Recommendations:

Notes and Observations: _____

_____

Follow-Up: _____

_____

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER
MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORTER

Important Meetings: _____

_____

_____

_____

School Visitations/Events: _____

_____

School Board Meetings: _____

_____

Conferences/Seminars: _____

_____

Correspondence: _____

_____

_____

Reading/Study Areas: _____

_____

Calls to Make: _____

_____

Do-Go-Get: _____

_____

Things To Do: _____

_____

_____

MY PERSONAL BOARD GOALS

Before filling this out, you should take some time to evaluate your time, family, and employment obligations, as well as your goals for this year. Realize that effective goal setting and planning will help you complete your objectives successfully. Use this sheet as an instrument to help you fine tune areas of interest and greatest need. Be totally honest with yourself. Only you will judge your efforts.

In each of these areas, look for things you want to do to improve, change, modify, expand, eliminate, or alter policies and practices.

BOARD MEETINGS:

BOARD RELATIONS:

COMMUNITY RELATIONS:

POLICY MAKING:

SCHOOL VISITATIONS:

PRESS RELATIONS:

LEGISLATIVE DIRECTION:

COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS:

EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RELATIONS:

CONFERENCES TO ATTEND:

DATE	*LOCATION*	*ORGANIZATION*	*TOPIC*

SKILLS TO ACQUIRE OR IMPROVE UPON:

OPINION LEADERS TO MEET:

BOOKS/ARTICLES TO READ:

SPEECH RECORD

Date Organization Type of Meeting Time Contact

Purpose Topic Length of Speech Audience Size

Speech Reception

Follow Up:

Date Organization Type of Meeting Time Contact

Purpose Topic Length of Speech Audience Size

Speech Reception

Follow Up:

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW YOU? OR WHO DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Legislators: _____

City Council: _____

Board of Supervisors: _____

Important Civil Servants: _____

Other Civic Officials: _____

PTA, PTO Leadership: _____

Advisory Council Members: _____

Booster Organization Leaders: _____

Site Administrators: _____

Employee Organization Leaders: _____

Chamber of Commerce Leadership: _____

Business Leaders: _____

Local Media Representatives: _____

Parents: _____

Senior Citizens: _____

Ministers: _____

Realtors: _____

Welcome Wagon Representatives: _____

Old Guard Opinion Leaders: _____

New Guard Opinion Leaders: _____

KEY OPINION LEADERS

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phones: _____

Position: _____ Title: _____

Affiliations: _____

Relationship: _____

Notes: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phones: _____

Position: _____ Title: _____

Affiliations: _____

Relationship: _____

Notes: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phones: _____

Position: _____ Title: _____

Affiliations: _____

Relationship: _____

Notes: _____

SUPPORTERS

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Areas of Interest: _____

School/s: _____

Organizations: _____

Relationship: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Areas of Interest: _____

School/s: _____

Organizations: _____

Relationship: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Areas of Interest: _____

School/s: _____

Organizations: _____

Relationship: _____

SAMPLE DAILY PLANNER

Date: _____ Day of Week: _____

Important Event: _____

Appointments

Breakfast: _____

8 _____ 1 _____

9 _____ 2 _____

10 _____ 3 _____

11 _____ 4 _____

12 _____ 5 _____

Evening: _____

Calls to Make: _____

_____

_____

_____

Do-Go-Get: _____

_____

_____

Task Planner: _____

_____

_____

_____

Reminders: _____

_____

_____

About the author

Molly McGee is a nationally known speaker and communications consultant, president and majority stock holder of Molly McGee and Associates, Inc., and author of several publications and the recipient of over 20 awards. Her workshops and speeches across the country for educators and school boards have earned her the nickname "the Erma Bombeck of Education."

In November, 1983, McGee retired after ten years as a member of the Anaheim Union High School District Board of Trustees. Elected when she was only 19 years old, McGee had the distinction of being the youngest elected woman in California history.

McGee has been a featured speaker and presenter for the National School Boards Association, the California School Boards Association, the Texas Association of School Boards, the Washington State School Directors Association, the Association of California School Administrators, the American Association of School Administrators, among others. She resides in Anaheim, California, with her husband, a veteran school administrator, and son.